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HEADLINE: PUBLISHER ACCUSES JOHN DE LOREAN OF FAKING TAPE

DATELINE: LOS ANGELES, DEC 9

KEYWORD: AM-FLYNT

BODY:

SEX MAGAZINE PUBLISHER LARRY FLYNT SAID TODAY HE BELIEVED CARMAKER JOHN DE LOREAN AND A BUSINESSMAN HAD FAKED A TAPE ALLEGED TO CONTAIN THREATS AGAINST DE LOREAN.

"I'M 100 PER CENT CONVINCED JOHN DE LOREAN AND GORDON NOVEL FAKED THAT TAPE," FLYNT TOLD A COURT.

HE ALSO ENDED HIS REFUSAL TO DISCLOSE THE SOURCE OF THE TAPE, SAYING HE OBTAINED IT FROM NOVEL, A NEW ORLEANS BUSINESSMAN, AND A LOS ANGELES TELEVISION REPORTER, JOHN PAULY. FLYNT HAS SO FAR BEEN ORDERED TO PAY FINES TOTALLING 410,000 DOLLARS FOR REFUSING TO REVEAL THE SOURCE.

U.S. DISTRICT COURT JUDGE ROBERT TAKASUGI PROMPTLY SUSPENDED THE FINES, WHICH HE HAD RECENTLY INCREASED TO A RATE OF 20,000 DOLLARS A DAY, AND ORDERED FLYNT TO RETURN TO COURT ON MONDAY TO GIVE MORE EVIDENCE.

IN THE TAPE, A GOVERNMENT INFORMER, JAMES HOFFMAN, WAS ALLEGED TO HAVE THREATENED DE LOREAN AND THE CARMAKER'S FIVE-YEAR-OLD DAUGHTER, KATHRYN, IF HE DID NOT GO AHEAD WITH A DEAL ALLEGED TO INVOLVE COCAINE.

DE LOREAN, WHO ONCE RAN A CAR FACTORY IN BELFAST, NORTHERN IRELAND, FACES CHARGES OF CONSPIRING TO IMPORT 220 POUNDS (100 KG) OF COCAINE, VALUED AT 24 MILLION DOLLARS.

LAWYERS HAVE SAID THE TAPE, IF PROVED AUTHENTIC, COULD HAVE A DEVASTATING EFFECT ON THE PROSECUTION'S CASE.

DE LOREAN AND HIS CHIEF LAWYER, HOWARD WEITZMAN, WERE NOT IMMEDIATELY AVAILABLE TO COMMENT ON FLYNT'S CLAIM.

BUT A SPOKESWOMAN AT KNXT TELEVISION STATION IN LOS ANGELES, WHERE PAULY WORKS, SAID HE HAD DESCRIBED FLYNT'S COURTROOM ALLEGATIONS CONCERNING HIM AS AN ABSURD FABRICATION.

FLYNT, 40, PUBLISHER OF HUSTLER AND OTHER MAGAZINES, WHO HAD EARLIER ANNOUNCED HE HAD WITHDRAWN AS A CANDIDATE FOR THE REPUBLICAN NOMINATION FOR THE U.S. PRESIDENCY, HAD BEEN HELD IN A LOS ANGELES JAIL PENDING TODAY'S HEARING.

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